

aid, determine assignments for possible future teams, and prepare to receive future shipments to deliver to agencies sheltering refugees.

I deeply appreciate the work of private relief organizations like Heart to Heart International that play a critical role in the public-private response to natural disasters. While private organizations do their part for disaster relief, government at every level needs to work together to plan for inevitable natural disasters and coordinate relief efforts. I will continue working within Congress to ensure that the federal government's response to future disasters, whether natural or man-made, is as efficient and timely as possible.

EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES OF NATION TO VICTIMS OF HURRICANE KATRINA

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN S. TANNER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 7, 2005

Mr. TANNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the tragedy that has resulted from Hurricane Katrina. Like our colleagues and so many Americans, I watched with sadness as this massive storm approached the coast and threatened to wreak unprecedented destruction on anything that stood in its path.

Over the hours that followed, we learned that entire communities along the Gulf of Mexico coast had literally been devastated, homes and businesses had been destroyed, churches and schools were in ruins, and floodwaters continued to rise in New Orleans. While the physical damage was restricted to the Gulf Coast region itself, we all recognized immediately that Hurricane Katrina was a national catastrophe that would touch millions and have long-term effects on us all.

The people of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama need strong leadership in Washington right now. The Federal Government can and will stand strong to do all we can until the flood waters recede, homes are rebuilt, families and communities are reunited and normalcy returns. However, it will require the time and efforts of us all.

The American people have responded with overwhelming generosity. Citizens from Tennessee and elsewhere across the country have donated their time, goods and money to help in every possible way with the relief effort. Many communities in our State have shown again how we earned our nickname "The Volunteer State," and I know many other communities have also proven their kindness, welcoming with open arms those who have literally lost everything and been forced from their homes. There are countless stories of families, churches and schools opening their doors and taking in these newly found homeless. I am proud of my fellow Tennesseans and our fellow Americans in showing such support for those who need help.

Our Nation continues to face unprecedented threats on physical, emotional and economic fronts, and we will fight those battles together. Federal, State and local officials, private industry and charitable organizations must work together to fight these battles and start the process of rebuilding our communities, and I

hope our Nation will be stronger. Mr. Speaker, we have watched a terrible disaster unfold, but I am certain Americans will stand together and meet these challenges with the American spirit that has helped us through so many tough times before.

ACE AND TJ RALLY THEIR LISTENERS

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 13, 2005

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, America is heartbroken by the loss of life and property Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama have experienced due to Hurricane Katrina. It is the largest natural disaster in the history of our country. As the people in the effected areas are suffering and have called for help, citizens across the country have heard their cries and have responded.

All across America citizens are organizing drives to help people in the Gulf States. They are giving money, gathering supplies, and working to make sure people displaced from these areas find shelter. I would like to recognize one such effort in my hometown of Charlotte, NC.

Charlotte has 2 very popular radio disc jockey's—Ace and TJ. They are two of Louisiana's favorite sons, and in the wake of disaster that has effected their home State, and areas around it, they organized one of the Nation's fastest and largest private responses to the disaster in the Gulf.

Ace and TJ decided they would do a donation drive for victims of Hurricane Katrina, asked their listeners to "give to the Gulf." They asked listeners to donate money and supplies such as water, canned goods, generators, diapers, and baby wipes for the victims. Their radio listener family responded to their call in large numbers.

Ace, TJ, Madden, Yankee Pete, Ryan, and the local radio station Kiss 95.1 FM began their donation drive on Monday, August 29, 2005, at noon. The response was so overwhelming that they continued to air their efforts until midnight that night.

Ace and TJ, over local 400 volunteers, and local businesses all pulled together and worked for more than 4 straight days for hurricane victims. They took in the supplies and loaded them onto tractor trailer trucks. Local restaurants even chipped in by contributing food for the volunteers, and businesses contributed supplies and expertise on how to properly load the supplies. The whole Charlotte community pulled together for this effort.

I would also like to point out that their listeners in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Beckley and Bluefield, West Virginia, and Birmingham, Alabama, also contributed money and supplies to their effort.

When Ace and TJ first started this drive they thought they would try to load up one tractor trailer, and get about \$50,000 to contribute to hurricane victims. I am happy to say that Ace and TJ's radio listeners went above and beyond their first estimates. The listeners poured out their hearts and have contributed almost \$500,000, and filled up 26 18-wheeler tractor trailers trucks full of supplies.

Then, if getting the money and supplies weren't enough, they personally ensured that

the supplies were driven down to Cenla, Louisiana, so they could be used immediately by the evacuees from the Gulf area.

Mr. Speaker, we should not forget the efforts of people like Ace and TJ and their volunteers, because in times like these we need to recognize them to remind us of what it is to love thy neighbor. I am proud of the compassion and generosity of the people I represent in the Charlotte area. I am also very proud and grateful to Ace and TJ and their radio team for pulling the community together and giving to those in need. And as we continue to help those in need, let us not forget the people who are really helping our fellow citizens. It is not the governments, it is the good people across our country like Ace and TJ.

ANNIVERSARY OF AWB

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 13, 2005

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, one year ago today, Congress allowed the Federal ban on assault weapons to expire without a floor vote.

The ban was allowed to die despite the support of two-thirds of the American people and the support of nearly every police organization in the country.

And although he did nothing to help, President Bush even said he supported the ban.

But Congress refused to listen to common sense and allowed weapons such as AK-47s and TEC-9s to be available throughout the United States.

Since then, the NRA and its allies in Congress have pursued a radical agenda to weaken our gun laws.

In July, the other body passed legislation giving the gun industry unprecedented protections from negligence lawsuits.

This legislation will see that negligence goes unpunished. It will also give the industry no incentive to pursue safety innovations for their products.

Had these protections been in place for the auto industry 40 years ago, cars wouldn't have seat belts, air bags, antilock brakes.

The NRA says this law will prevent frivolous lawsuits against the gun industry, but it is a problem that doesn't exist.

Over the past 10 years, over 10 million lawsuits have been filed in the U.S. Only 57 have involved the gun industry. And only 12 of those have been ruled frivolous by judges.

The current system works, frivolous lawsuits against the gun industry are not coming to trial.

Also, the NRA has begun a lobbying campaign to convince state legislatures to overturn workplace gun bans.

Whether it is at a daycare center, school, church, or hazardous materials plant, the NRA wants employees to come to work armed. Again, it defies common sense.

Guns are already the third greatest hazard in the workforce and 17 Americans die on the job because of guns each week.

Instead of dismissing irresponsible business practices and allowing guns in daycare centers, Congress should focus on legislation that keeps guns out of the hands of criminals and terrorists.

I have introduced legislation to improve the National Instant Background Check System or NICS. NICS is the database used to make sure potential gun buyers are legally permitted to own firearms.

But the system is only as good as the information States provide. Twenty-five States have entered less than sixty percent of their felony convictions into the NICS database.

In 13 States, domestic violence restraining orders are not entered into NICS.

My bill would require States and Federal agencies to provide the FBI with all relevant records necessary to conduct effective background checks.

The bill establishes a nationwide grant program to allow State law enforcement agencies

to update and transmit records for inclusion in NICS.

Another step towards reducing the threat of gun violence is to include individuals on Federal terrorist watch lists in the NICS system.

Earlier this year, the United States Government Accounting Office issued a report revealing 44 instances of persons listed on Federal terrorist watch lists attempting to purchase firearms during a 4-month period in 2004.

Thirty-five of these transactions resulted in the successful purchase of a firearm.

Our current laws allow our enemies in the War on Terror to arm themselves within our borders.

I have introduced legislation to place persons on the Transportation Security Administration's No Fly List into the NICS system.

If we do not trust an individual to board a plane, common sense dictates that we should not allow them to buy guns.

Both sides of the gun issue have a vested interest in reducing gun violence.

In 2002 alone, guns killed 30,000 Americans. Studies show gun violence costs our health care system more than \$100 billion per year.

Mr. Speaker, we can work together to achieve common sense solutions to gun violence without infringing on anybody's 2nd Amendment Rights.